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House of Representatives

The House met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. FITZPATRICK).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC,
May 17, 2017.

I hereby appoint the Honorable BRIAN K. FITZPATRICK to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

PAUL D. RYAN,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

MORNING-HOUR DEBATE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 3, 2017, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning-hour debate.

The Chair will alternate recognition between the parties, with each party limited to 1 hour and each Member other than the majority and minority leaders and the minority whip limited to 5 minutes, but in no event shall debate continue beyond 11:50 a.m.

LADIES IN WHITE 2017 FREEDOM AWARD

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) for 5 minutes.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, last night I had the honor of presenting the International Republican Institute's 2017 Freedom Award to great freedom fighters in my native homeland of Cuba, the Ladies in White, las Damas de Blanco, although my dear friend Berta Soler, the leader of the Ladies in White, was not able to be there. Why? Because the Cuban regime

refused to allow her to leave the island. We were lucky enough to have one of the organization's founding members, Blanca Reyes Castanon, with us accepting the award on the group's behalf.

I have had the privilege of knowing both Blanca and Berta for so many years, and it has been an honor for me to be able to raise awareness about the brave and inspiring Ladies in White, whether I do it here from the House floor or by hosting them here in our Nation's Capital or in my district in Miami, Florida.

Each Sunday in Cuba, the Ladies in White fight for their relatives and all political prisoners in Cuba, demonstrating peacefully as they walk to church.

Yet each Sunday, Mr. Speaker, they are harassed. They are beaten. They are arrested by the regime's thugs.

As a Cuban refugee myself, fleeing the island with my parents when I was only 8 years old, I have seen how the regime has morphed and evolved its methods of repression over the years.

Its treatment of the Ladies in White is emblematic of how it treats all political dissidents, with intimidation, with harassment, with arbitrary arrests, with short-term detentions, with denying them the ability to travel, by trying to bully dissidents into silence.

It attempts to disguise its tactics of repression, trying to fly under the radar so that outside eyes are fooled or placated or feel that they can simply look the other way. But we won't, Mr. Speaker. We won't look the other way.

Despite all of the propaganda, despite all of the misguided policy over the past years, the reality is that the regime's repression is only getting worse, and dissidents like the Ladies in White are bearing the brunt of the regime's intimidation and violence.

The regime is terrified of anyone who speaks for their God-given human rights in Cuba. It wants to project an

image to the outside world that the situation in Cuba is improving, but we must not be fooled, Mr. Speaker. The regime will do whatever it takes to remain in power. That is its sole desire, to remain in power. We must be clear-eyed.

We must be honest about what is really going on in Cuba. We must not be placated by the regime's lies or by those who repeat them. We must fight for the truth and show the Cuban people that they are not alone, that together we all stand in solidarity with them in the pursuit of freedom, in the pursuit of democracy and the ability to practice their religion, to live without fear of arbitrary arrests, to live without fear of torture, and finally one day to be able to choose their own leaders.

And we can start by supporting the faces of Cuba's future, the dissidents, the human rights champions, the defenders of freedom, like the brave women of the Ladies in White. They represent the true Cuba. They are Cuba's future. And it was my honor to present them with the IRI's 2017 Freedom Award last night.

Congratulations to las Damas de Blanco, the Ladies in White.

CALLING FOR IMPEACHMENT OF THE PRESIDENT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas (Mr. AL GREEN) for 5 minutes.

Mr. AL GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today with a heavy heart. I rise today with a sense of responsibility and duty to the people who have elected me, a sense of duty to this country, a sense of duty to the Constitution of the United States of America.

I rise today, Mr. Speaker, to call for the impeachment of the President of the United States of America for obstruction of justice. I do not do this for political purposes, Mr. Speaker. I do

□ This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., □ 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.



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